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LEE-SCHAKOWSKY AMENDMENT TO PREVENT PERMANENT U.S. MILITARY BASES IN IRAQ PASSES HOUSE

WASHINGTON, DC -- An amendment to the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act sponsored by U.S. Representatives Jan Schakowsky and Barbara Lee, founding members of the Out-of-Iraq Caucus, today passed the House of Representatives. The Lee-Schakowsky-Allen-Hinchey amendment would prevent the U.S. from establishing permanent bases in Iraq.

Upon passage, Representative Schakowsky remarked, "Because the Bush Administration will set no timeline for the withdrawal U.S. troops from Iraq, the House acted to make sure our troops will not be left in Iraq indefinitely. Three years into the war, tens of thousands of American troops remain targets of a growing Iraqi insurgency. With no plan to win the peace and to secure Iraq, President Bush has left us with no good options. It is time to strategically redeploy our troops from Iraq and to let the Iraqis govern their nation."

During the debate on the floor of the House, Representative Schakowsky delivered the following statement:

I rise in strong support of the Lee-Schakowsky-Allen-Hinchey Amendment which would prohibit any funds from this supplemental from being used to enter into a basing rights agreement between the United States and Iraq.

It has been suggested by top military leaders, including General John Abizaid, that the United States may want to keep a long-term military presence in Iraq to bolster moderates against extremists in the region and protect Iraqi oil supplies.

If true, this scheme is fraught with danger. As anyone with a newspaper or television can see, the presence of U.S. troops in Iraq has been a powerful recruitment tool for the Iraqi insurgency.

Last year, General Casey testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee that "to gradually reduce the visibility of coalition forces across Iraq [will be] taking away one of the elements that fuels the insurgency."

I urge all of my colleagues to support this amendment.